

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1-4 (canceled)

Claim 5 (new). A network of data switches, each data switch having a plurality of ports adapted for receiving and transmitting packets and arranged for transferring data packets internally between the ports of the data switches according to address information in the packets, the data switches being connected as an array, the array formed by connections between ports of pairs of the switches, the network of data switches including a master switch and other data switches, the master switch configured to issue commands to the other data switches, the commands in the form of control data packets, the other data switches comprising slave data switches configured to recognize the control data packets and to operate based on the commands contained within the control data packets.

Claim 6 (new). The network of data switches according to claim 5, wherein the master data switch is further operable to determine a topology of the network of data switches.

Claim 7 (new). The network of data switches according to claim 5, wherein each slave data switch is further configured implement a command within a control data packet if the slave data switch determines that the control data packet is intended to cause the command to be carried out at the slave data switch.

Claim 8 (new). The network of data switches according to claim 7, wherein a first slave data switch is further operable to pass a control data packet from the first slave data switch to a second slave data switch if the first slave data switch determines that the control data packet is not intended to cause the command to be carried out at the first slave data switch.

Claim 9 (new). A method of operating a plurality of data switches, each data switch having a plurality of ports adapted for receiving and transmitting packets and arranged for transferring data packets internally between ports of others of the plurality of data switches according to address information in the data packets, the method comprising:

- employing at least one port of a master data switch of the plurality of data switches to issue command packets to slave data switches of the plurality of switches;

- employing at least one port of each of the slave data switches to receive the command packets;

- recognizing within the slave data switches the command packets and implementing commands specified in the command packets.

Claim 10 (new). The method according to claim 9, wherein the recognizing step further comprises determining at a first slave data switch whether a command packet transmitted to the first slave data switch is intended to cause a command within the command packet to be carried out at the first slave data switch.

Claim 11 (new). The method of claim 10 further comprising implementing the command at the first slave data switch if the first slave data switch determines that the command packet is intended to cause the command to be carried out at the first slave data switch.

Claim 12 (new). The method of claim 11 further comprising passing the command from the first slave data switch to a second slave data switch if the first slave data switch determines that the command packet is not intended to cause the command to be carried out at the first slave data switch.

Claim 13 (new). A method according to claim 12 further comprising:
determining at the master data switch a topology of the network of data switches.

Claim 14 (new). The method according to claim 13, further comprising assigning IDs to the slave data switches, said IDs included in subsequent packets passing between the switches within the network of data switches.

Claim 15 (new). A method according to claim 9, further comprising:

determining, under the control of the master data switch, a topology of the network of data switches.

Claim 16 (new). The method according to claim 15, further comprising assigning IDs to the slave data switches, said IDs included in subsequent packets passing between the switches within the network of data switches.